

Tribune Building
154 Printing House Square
(northeast corner of Nassau
and Spruce Streets)
New York
New York County
New York

HABS No. NY-5468

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
801 19th Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5468

TRIBUNE BUILDING

Address: 154 Printing House Square, northeast corner of Nassau and Spruce Streets; New York, New York County, New York.

Present Owner: The building was demolished after demolition permits were granted on June 7, 1966. Pace College now owns the site.

Statement of Significance: One of New York's first skyscrapers when built in 1874, the Tribune Building was raised to its present height by the addition of nine stories in 1905. It was designed by Richard Morris Hunt and was one of a group of prosperous, nineteenth-century newspaper buildings fronting on Printing House Square.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: The property acquired by the Tribune Association by 1873 was Lot 1 in Block 102, which consisted of a roughly U-shaped plot fronting on Nassau, Spruce, and Frankfort Streets. Lots 4 and 5 extended the Tribune's property approximately 57'-6" eastward along Frankfort Street. Lots 1, 4, and 5 were later legally combined and designated as Lot 1.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Grantor</u>	<u>Grantee</u>
7/13/1860 Liber 818, page 245. (Lot 1)	Greeley Horace Mary Y. C.	Tribune Assoc.
8/8/1867 Liber 1030, page 145. (Lot 1)	Powers Wm. P. et al. Champlin Christopher Margaret- -Ten Eyck Powers Thomas	The Tribune Assoc.

9/17/1867 Liber 1033, page 127. (Lot 1)	Powers Wm. P. et al. Champlin Christopher Margaret- -Ten Eyck Powers Thomas	The Tribune Assoc.
4/30/1873 Liber 1252, page 434. (Lot 1)	Bodine Mary A. Williamson (formerly) Bodine Albert	The Tribune Assoc.
5/20/1873 Liber 1251, page 626. (Lot 1)	Farrar Charles Mary Jane	The Tribune Assoc.
5/10/1905 Liber 96, page 81. (Lot 5)	Reid Whitelaw Elisabeth- -Miles	Tribune Assoc.
5/10/1905 Liber 95, page 90. (Lot 4)	Reid Whitelaw Elisabeth- -Miles	Tribune Assoc.
5/10/1905 Liber 95, page 89. (Lot 5)	Reid Whitelaw Elisabeth- -Miles	Tribune Assoc.
5/1/1926 Liber 3545, page 75. (Lots 1,5)	The Frank A. Munsey Co.	N.Y. Tribune Inc.
3/3/1928 Liber 3647, page 172. (Lots 1,4,5)	Frank A. Munsey Co.	Metropolitan Museum of Art
3/3/1928 Liber 3647, page 151. (Lots 1,4,5)	Metropolitan Museum of Art	Museum Estates Inc.

7/20/1935	Bank of N.Y. and Trust Co.	Bishop Cortland F.
Liber 3904,	(Trustee of)	(extrs. of)
page 372.	Bishop David Wolfe	Bishop Amy Bend
(Lots 1,4,5)	Berle Beatrice Bend	Nixon Edith
	Alice Bishop	Allen George L.
	Beatrice-	
	-Van Cortland	
	(gdn. of)	
6/5/1937	Bishop Cortlandt Field	Museum Estates Inc.
Liber 3961,	(extrs. of)	
page 349.	Bishop Amy Bend	
(Lots 1,4,5)		
12/17/1942	Museum Estates Inc.	Arrigotti Mario
Liber 4182,		
page 365.		
(Lots 1,4,5)		
7/6/1945	Arrigotti Mario	Casper Harry
Liber 4366,		
page 310.		
(Lots 1,4,5)		
7/10/1945	Casper Harry	154 Nassau Corp.
Liber 4365,		
page 122.		
(Lots 1,4,5)		
4/16/1946	154 Nassau Corp.	Glekel Newton
Liber 4425,		Drimmer Harold
page 519.		
(Lots 1,4,5)		
8/1/1946	Glekel Newton	Nassau Tribune Bldg. Inc.
Liber 4452,	Drimmer Harold	
page 536.		
(Lot 1)		
11/2/1951	Nassau Tribune Bldg. Inc.	Nassau Tribune Bldg. Co.
Liber 4752,		
page 423.		
(Lot 1)		
7/11/1956	Nassau Tribune Bldg. Co.	Sova Management Corp.
Liber 4970,		
page 671.		
(Lot 1)		

10/22/1956 Liber 4981, page 82. (Lot 1)	Sova Management Corp.	154 Nassau St. Realty Co.
2/13/1962 Liber 5178, page 348. (Lot 1)	154 Nassau St. Realty Co.	154 Nassau St. Realty Corp.
7/8/1966 Liber 79, page 154. (Lot 1)	City of New York (Condemnation)	
4/5/1967 Liber 168, page 1. (Lot 1)	City of New York (Condemnation)	
1/27/1967 Liber 146, page 447. (Lot 1)	City of New York	Pace College

2. Date of erection: Demolition of an earlier Tribune Building on the same site was begun on May 17, 1873, and completed by May 31, 1873. Construction of the new Tribune Building was begun immediately thereafter. The cornerstone was laid on January 24, 1874, and the formal opening was held on April 10, 1875.
3. Architect: Richard Morris Hunt (1828-1895). After studying in Europe from 1843 to 1855, Hunt worked briefly with Thomas U. Walter in Washington and then established an office in New York. He designed the Coal and Iron Exchange in New York, the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty, the Administration Building at the World's Columbian Exposition, and residences for the Vanderbilt family.
4. Builder, suppliers: Edward E. Raht supervised the construction for Hunt. The following firms were involved in the construction of the building:

Thomas Crane & Co., granite foundation
Peter R. O'Brien, masonry, plastering
New-York Fire Proof Building Company, concrete blocks
for floors and partitions
Union Iron Co., iron floor beams
Kellogg Bridge Co., of Buffalo, roof and tower iron
Nicholl & Billewell, iron for vaults
J.B. & J.M. Cornell, iron for stairs, elevator, enclosure,

iron work of first story windows
Architectural Iron Works of N.Y., interior iron castings
Geo. Fischer & Bro., roof slate
Penrhyn Slate Co., interior slate
Clark & Co., of London, steel shutters
S.B. Althause & Co., rear shutters
Morris Delano & Co., glass
James O. Morse, steam heating apparatus
Melancton Hanford of Boston, elevators
W. Germond & Co., carpenter work
Herter Brothers, woodwork of Counting and Banking Room
Garibaldi & Co., plaster finish of halls and Counting Room
Casone and Isola, marble work
L.F. & A. Beckwith, tiling
Alexander Orr, plumbing and gas fittings
Mitchell, Vance & Co., gas fixtures
Hopkins & Kickinson Manufacturing Co., hardware
Hyatt Bros., area lights
Wolff & Dusenbury, pneumatic tubes
Newman & Capron, speaking tubes and electric annunciators

5. Original plans and construction: The following article from The American Builder, October, 1873, describes the initial phase of construction:

THE NEW TRIBUNE BUILDING.

The upward progress of the massive foundations of the new Tribune building at Spruce street and Printing-House square, enables the observer to conceive something of the substantial and stately aspect which the completed edifice will wear. The present extent of the piers and basewalls forms, however, but a part of the ground plan of the final structure.--The measure of the portion now building is 91 feet on Printing-House square, and 52 feet on Spruce street. When the printing house of The Tribune and other buildings in the rear give way (immediately on the occupancy of the front), for the completion of the whole design, the Spruce street front will have a facade 100 feet broad, and the structure will extend through to Frankfort st., a clear width of 168 feet, with a front of 29 feet upon that street. There will be in the building, a cellar, basement, and nine stories, excluding the attic. On Printing-House square, where huge foundations with granite bond-plates and capstones are now lying, a majestic tower will rise 242 feet. The main entrance will be in the front of this tower, which from the starting point of the foundation, 25 feet below the sidewalk level, to the finial, will measure 267 feet. Under the foundation walls is a concrete bed 10 feet wide and 18 inches thick, composed of

Portland cement, sand, gravel, and stone. This is a novel composition in this city, and hardens very quickly into extreme solidity. Upon this concrete is a continued course of granite slabs 18 inches thick, and varying from 10 feet to 6 feet 6 inches in width. Under the piers of the front and tower walls there are other granite slabs over these. Some of them weigh over ten tons.--Upon these the brick-work rests. The piers of the front are of so-called Croton pavers' brick, laid in Portland cement, with granite bond-stones 10 inches thick. The inner walls are of Haverstraw brick, laid in Rosendale cement. On the level of the basement floor starts the granite work of the front, extending in solid blocks, bonding alternately through the whole depth of the piers to the second story. The main entrance is flanked on either hand with massive columns of highly polished granite, and an imposing feature of the seventh story is a row of smaller columns of the same material, extending around the entire front on three streets. Baltimore front brick, laid in black mortar, will be the chief material above the second story level, and heavy granite trimming for windows, cornices, and towers.--Geometrical designs in white, black, and red brick, will vary the exterior, and the whole appearance of the building will be unique as well as imposing. The interior will be in every part fireproof. All floor beams will be of iron, supported only by solid masonry. The floors will be of tile, and the partitions of tile or plaster of Paris. No cast-iron columns will be used as supports. Three elevators will give easy access to every story, and the whole building will be supplied with every device for comfort and beauty. In the first story, at the corner, will be The Tribune counting-room. The editorial rooms will be temporarily in the eighth story, and the compositors' rooms in the ninth, which will have a height of twenty feet.--When the building is all completed, the editorial rooms will be in the ninth story, on the Park front, and the composing room, stereotype room and proof room in the rear of the same story, running from Spruce to Frankfort st. With these exceptions, the entire building, from the beautiful basement offices for bankers, on Printing-House square, to the eighth story, will be for rent to professional tenants. No manufacturing business of any description will be admitted to the front building.--Richard M. Hunt is the architect. The building will be the highest on Manhattan Island.

An illustration of the portion of the building constructed in 1873-75 was published in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, December 1877, and reproduced in American Heritage, October, 1967, p. 105. An illustration in The New-York Sketch Book of Architecture, shows a competitive design in the July, 1874, issue, thereby suggesting that a competition was held.

6. Alterations and additions: An addition to the Tribune Building was begun on July 12, 1881, and completed in 1882. This construction completed the building as it had been originally planned by Hunt, although the architect was reported by the New-York Daily Tribune on May 1, 1882, to be Edward E. Raht. This addition was often illustrated before it had actually been constructed (see HABS photocopy of old view at Museum of the City of New York). The following abstract from an article in the New-York Daily Tribune of April 17, 1882, describes the addition:

FIRE-PROOF OFFICES

The addition to the Tribune Building is now rapidly approaching completion, and we are safe in announcing that tenants will certainly be given possession on the 1st of May, and perhaps, in a few cases, a little earlier. This addition completes the entire structure as originally planned, and, besides giving ample accommodations to all departments of The Tribune, makes it rank among the largest office buildings in the city. It contains over one hundred and fifty rooms for rent. Including the ground floor, it is eleven stories high, with a twenty-five foot cellar beneath, and a twelfth story, for janitor and printers' restaurant, on the roof. It has a frontage of 91 feet on the Park, 100 feet on Spruce-st., and 29 feet on Frankfort-st., and the rear extends across the entire block between Spruce and Frankfort.

The whole structure is believed to be absolutely fire-proof. The brick walls are of extreme thickness and solidity, and the granite work in them might be split out by fire and water without materially impairing their strength. The windows, except those fronting on the Park, are all protected by steel shutters. The beams are of iron, filled in with concrete arches. There is not an iron column supporting a weight in the structure; --every floor-beam resting solidly on brick walls. The staircases are of iron with slate treads. The partitions are of brick, or of concrete blocks, and the plaster rests directly on these. The halls are floored with tile and wainscoted with marble. What wood-work there is about the elevators is to be replaced by iron. The elevator for employees of The Tribune is in the rear of the building, with a separate entrance on another street, and not communicating at all with the floors occupied by tenants.

Work on the addition was done by the following firms:

Robert L. Darragh, mason
Bodwell Granite Company and Hallowell (Maine) Granite
Company, granite work

Fireproof Building Company, tiles
Cheney & Hewlett, iron contractors
Cooper Hewitt & Co., rolled beams
George Fischer & Bros., roofing
Clark, Bennett & Co., steel rolling shutters
London & Manchester Plate Glass Company, and Theodore
W. Morris Co., glass
The Nason Manufacturing Company, steam heating
Whittier Mackin & Co., of Boston, elevators and engines
Meeker & Hadden, of Newark, N.J., carpenters
A.L. Fauchere & Co., and Volkening & Co., marble work
Alexander Orr, plumbing and gas fittings
Archer & Pancoast Manu. Co., gas fixtures
A.G. Newman, hardware
New-York Mastic Works, artificial sidewalk

In The New York Times of August 22, 1903, the following plans for raising the building were announced:

Tribune Building Plans

Structure to be Raised from Ten to
Nineteen Stories

Will be Visible Within a Radius of
Twenty-five Miles of the City
Hall--Tower to be Rebuilt

The Tribune Association is to add a skyscraper to the Printing House Square neighborhood by increasing the height of its building from ten to nineteen stories.

The Tribune's home was known from the first as the Tall Tower, and when it is more than 100 feet higher than it is now it will have the distinction of being not only a landmark visible within a radius of twenty-five miles from City Hall, but the only skyscraper with solid masonry walls, and not having a skeleton core of steel. Incidentally the alterations will receive a partial remodeling of the present building. The cost of the alterations, which will be carried out on the plans of the architects, D'Oench & Yost, and L. Thouvard, will be \$350,000, and the work will be finished about December, 1904.

Evidently these plans were not carried out immediately. In 1905 the Tribune Association acquired two lots adjacent to the 1881-82 addition on Frankfort Street. The New York Times of March 14, 1905, subsequently announced the following building plans:

TRIBUNE BUILDING ADDITION

To Add Nine More Stories and Build a
Nineteen-Story Annex

The work of adding nine stories to the Tribune Building, at Nassau and Spruce Streets, and of building a nineteen-story annex on lots recently acquired in Frankfort Street, will be begun on May 1.

The new parts of the building will harmonize in appearance with the existing structure, but will be of steel skeleton construction. The main entrance will be remodeled, so as to afford direct access to the main floor from the street level instead of by the flight of stone steps now in use. The cost of the changes will probably amount to \$750,000.

Business will be carried on as usual throughout the Tribune Building, while the construction work is in progress, and very few of the tenants will be disturbed.

7. Important old views:

- a. At the Map and Print Room, New-York Historical Society are six views of Printing House Square and Park Row, which show the Tribune Building. (See HABS photocopy of negative 396C of "Park Row, Printing House Square . . . Summer 1877 . . .").
- b. At the Print Room of the New York Public Library is a wood engraving of "New Tribune Building" in the Eno Collection; this view is illustrated in the New-York Daily Tribune, April 10, 1875.
- c. At the Print Room of the New York Public Library is a colored view of "The New Tribune Building, J.L. Giles Del." in the Ford Collection.
- d. At both the Print Room of the New York Public Library and at the Museum of the City of New York is a colored lithograph of "The New Tribune Building, Armstrong & Co. Lith. Boston." (See HABS photocopy from Museum of the City of New York).
- e. Plate XXVI in The New-York Sketch Book of Architecture, July 1876, is an unusual photograph of the rear of the building. Plate I in The New-York Sketch Book of Architecture, January, 1874, illustrates the main facade of the building.

B. Sources of Information

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Demolition notices from Plans Desk, Department of Buildings, Municipal Building, New York, N.Y. All other building records were destroyed at the time of the demolition of the building.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Atlas of the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York. Desk and Library Edition. New York: G.W. Bromley & Co., 1916.

"The Best Lawyers' Offices in the City," New-York Daily Tribune, April 7, 1875, p. 7.

[Criticism of the Tribune Building.] New-York Daily Tribune, May 4, 1875, p. 6.

Ferree, Barr. Richard Morris Hunt: His Art and Work. New York: 1895. (Reprint from Architecture and Building, December 7, 1895).

"Friendly Congratulations," New-York Daily Tribune, November 7, 1903, p. 9.

A History of Real Estate, Building and Architecture in New York City During the Last Quarter of a Century. New York: Record and Guide, c. 1898.

King's New York Views. New York: Albert B. King & Co., 1897.

King's Photographic Views of New York. Boston: Moses King, 1895.

"The Metropolitan Newspaper," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LVI (December, 1877), 43-59.

"'Newspaper Row' Shrinking Again," The New York Times, May 20, 1966, p. 49.

"New Tenants of the Tribune Building," New-York Daily Tribune, May 1, 1882, p. 8.

"The New Tribune," New-York Daily Tribune, April 10, 1875, p. 4.

"The New Tribune," New-York Daily Tribune, April 10, 1875, pp. 9, 12.

"The New Tribune Building," The American Builder, IX (October, 1873), 235.

"The New Tribune Building," The New-York Sketch Book of Architecture, I (January, 1874), plate I.

[Notice of cornerstone laying ceremonies.] The New York Times, January 25, 1874, p. 8.

"Pacing the Tribune," Progressive Architecture, XLVII (July, 1966), 57-58.

"The Palace-Builders of the New York Tribune," Potter's American Monthly, IV (July, 1875), 535-38.

Schuyler, Montgomery. "A Review of the Works of Richard Morris Hunt," The Architectural Record, V (October-December, 1895), 97-180.

"Tribune Building Extension," The New York Times, October 31, 1903, p. 16.

"The Tribune Building, New York," The New-York Sketch Book of Architecture, III (July, 1876), plate XXVI.

"The Tribune Has Had Five Buildings, Including One of City's Earliest Skyscrapers," New York Herald Tribune, XI, April 13, 1941, p. 24.

Twenty-First Annual Report of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, 1916. Albany; 1916.

Wright, P.B. "Richard Morris Hunt," The Inland Architect and News Record, XXVI (August, 1895), 2-4.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Records in the New York Herald Tribune Morgue, at the John Hay Whitney Herald Tribune Library, New York University.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: One of New York's first skyscrapers when built in 1874, the Tribune Building was raised to its final height by the addition of nine stories in 1905. It was designed by Richard Morris Hunt and was one of a group of newspaper buildings fronting on Printing House Square.
2. Condition of fabric: Demolished.

B. Description of Exterior

Note: Since the building had been demolished at the time of this report, the following description is based on the HABS photographs accompanying this report.

1. Number of stories: Sixteen stories to base of mansard roof; three stories housed under mansard roof.
2. Number of bays: Facades on Printing House Square, Spruce, and Frankfort Streets were each four bays wide.
3. Over-all dimensions: Printing House Square facade measured approximately 90'-0"; Spruce Street facade measured approximately 98'-5"; Frankfort Street facade measured approximately 86'-2".
4. Layout, shape: Irregular in plan.
5. Wall construction finish and color: Granite on first and second stories; red brick above with geometrical designs between stories in black brick. In the first nine stories there were granite window trimmings.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance on Nassau Street was located in the bay beneath the tower, the third bay from the north. Shops located in the three other bays each had separate entrances.
 - b. Windows: On the Nassau Street facade, each bay contained three windows, each having one-over-one light double-hung sash.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape: Mansard roof, housing three stories.
 - b. Cornice: Bracketed granite cornice from 1874 building remains between seventh and eighth floor levels of Nassau Street facade. Below the mansard roof there was a granite cornice topped by a fenestrated parapet.

C. Description of Interior

Note: Since the building had been demolished, it was not possible to prepare this description.

D. Site:

1. Orientation: The main facade on Printing House Square faced West, toward City Hall Park.

Prepared by Diana S. Waite
Architectural Historian
April, 1968